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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Louisa Matthiasdottir (1917-2000)

*Selected Paintings*

**October 11 – November 15, 2008**

The Tibor de Nagy Gallery is pleased to present its first exhibition of paintings by the celebrated Icelandic painter Louisa Matthiasdottir. The artist is known for her realist paintings that employ a vibrant palette and a strong geometric structure. The exhibition will comprise a selection of landscapes, still lifes, and self-portraits from the 1970s through the 1990s, and include a series of landscape paintings that the artist completed while at Skowhegan in Maine. Unlike her paintings of the austere Icelandic countryside, the Maine landscapes include dense woods, verdant foliage and a lush palette.

The artist studied in Copenhagen and Paris and was a prominent younger member of Iceland's first avant-garde. In 1942 she moved to New York where she attended Hans Hofmann's school. Along with a group of fellow former Hofmann students, including Robert de Niro, Larry Rivers, Nell Blaine, and Jane Freilicher, she helped to foster a new sense of relevance for representational painting.

Painter John Yau in the exhibition catalogue writes:

In the early 1980s, Louisa Matthiasdottir told the poet Mark Strand, "The reason I paint is because I want to paint what I see. But to paint what I see, I must build from color." Of course, that wasn't the end of it. Matthiasdottir, who was famous among her friends for being a person of few words, went on to say, "either a form fits in the painting or it doesn't. After all, a painting isn't really a still-life or a landscape, it's a mere canvas. It can never be real life. It must be a painting." Although these sound like the fighting words of a hardcore abstract artist, Matthiasdottir was a realist painter who, like all significant artists working in this mode, reinvented it. Engaging contradictions lie at the heart of her accomplishment.

The artist's work has been exhibited and collected widely throughout the United States and in Iceland. Her paintings are included in many private and public collections, including the Tate Gallery, London, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. A monograph on the artist's work and career was published by Nesutgafan Publishing and Hudson Hills Press in 1999. A traveling retrospective was presented at the Scandinavia House in New York, and traveled to Iceland and Europe.

Catalogue Available

**For further information and visuals please contact 212.262.5050.**

**Upcoming exhibitions: Stuart Shils, Recent Paintings, November 20, 2008 - January 10, 2009.  
Carolyn Harris, Recent Work, November 20, 2008 – January 10, 2009.**